

Nutrition Style of Prophet Mohammad^(saww) **(By Relying on Eating and Drinking Habits)**

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Abstract

There is a great deal of research has been conducted on how to eat and drink in Islam. This research article will cover prophet Mohammad^(saww) eating and drinking habits as well as the etiquette, including how he eat, what kind of food he loved, the amount eaten, with whom he loved to eat, eating etiquette such as calling Allah's name before each meal, ending the meal by praising the lord, hygiene, and avoiding wastefulness. Since Prophet Mohammad^(saww) was sent from God to deliver the message of God to help people to reach perfection in their life, He is the role model for all mankind in every aspect of life. Through this paper, the need to learn good eating and drinking habits will be discussed by taking evidence from Islamic sources. This evidence then is further reinforced through the clear understanding of the hadith through various sources. Lastly, conclusion of the paper sums up the discussion and presents recommendations through which the element of etiquettes of eating and drinking can be effectively incorporated in one's life.

Key Words: Eating Habits, Drinking Etiquettes, Observance Hygiene, Prophet Mohammad^(saww)

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Introduction

Eating and drinking are among the basic requirement of a person's life. Body works as a driving force for the soul. One has to eat properly; otherwise disorder will occur in the body which eventually disturbs body itself and mind.

The holy Quran in states that:

«يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ»

“O children of Adam! attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant”.¹

It is clearly indicated that one should eat less and not to waste food. The prophets and saints have always kept their food intake at low level and had correct approach to eating. They ensured to have right and optimal level of eating to have better body's wellbeing and to bring their soul to perfection.

It is necessary to study the eating and drinking habits of Prophet Mohammad^(saww) for better health and physical appearance. Considering the vast amount of hadith from Prophet Mohammad^(saww) about the etiquette of drinking and eating, we find answers to when, why and how did he eat, what type of food, and with whom he used to eat?

The answers to these will be followed in the below discussions.

1. Surah Al-A'raf, Verse 31.

The Body; The Main Aim of Eating

God in the holy Quran says:

«كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ قُلْ فَاتُوا بِالَّتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ»

“All food was lawful to the children of Israel except that which Israel had forbidden to himself, before the Taurat was revealed. Say: Bring then the Taurat and read it, if you are truthful”.¹

Eating and drinking are the natural necessity of human life. It is necessary to have a proper intake of food and drink to survive; However from the viewpoint of Prophet Mohammad^(saww) the need of physical power is more important than survival. The body plays a main role for the soul; for the soul to work perfectly needs to have proper food intake.

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) said:

“O’ God, grant us abundance (barakah) of bread and do not let us be separated from it, for without it we will not be able to perform ritual prayer, fast, and perform our divine obligations”.²

Imam Sadiq^(as) also says:

“The foundation of the body is based on bread”.³

According to approach Abuzar Ghaffari, the best deed after believing God and obligations is to eat bread.

1. Surah Al-i’ Imran, Verse 93.

2. Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 5, P. 73, No. 13; Ibid, Vol. 6, P. 287, No. 6.

3. Ibid, Vol. 6, P. 286, No. 3 and 7.

What he meant was without a food it will be difficult to worship God. Bread and food gives strength to body and soul to perform obligations. The main aim is to eat to survive rather than live to eat.

Considering above, the primary goal of eating Prophet Mohammad^(saww) was to prepare for fulfilling ritual obligations.

The kinds of Food to Eat

God in the holy Quran says:

﴿فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كُتُوبَكُمْ لِيَلَهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾

“Therefore eat of what Allah has given you, lawful and good (things), and give thanks for Allah's favor if Him do you serve”.¹

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to eat the food which was permissible (halal) by God, simple and beneficial.

On the other, Prophet's role towards its people is to guide; therefore he was careful by eating permissible food. He loved to eat food with his family and servants.

The prophet Mohammad^(saww) insisted on eating with others and to use to begin his meal by praising his lord and ending by praise.

The permissible food not only covers halal food but also other prospective such as whether you have paid for the food which you are eating or whether you have a permission to eat food.

1. Surah An-Nahl, Verse 114.

Tabarsi stated in “Makarim al-Akhlaq”:
Prophet Mohammad^(saww) always used to eat simple food, he never insisted on any specific type of food when offered or invited.¹

In most of the cases Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to have barley bread.

According to view of Imam Raza^(as):
“barley bread is recommended in Islam as it is a food of Prophets and removes illness from stomach”.²

According to view of Imam Sadiq^(as):
“Prophet^(saww) used to love stew and mentions that “one day Prophet came home and asked for stew from his wife Umme salma, she replied she didn’t prepared and she only had vinegar. Prophet Mohammad^(saww) replied vinegar itself is a nice stew and recommends all to eat it. He further added that the house: which has vinegar is not poor”.³

There are several other traditions from Imam Sadiq^(as) mentioned by Al-Kulayni in “Al –Kafi”, that Prophet used to eat bread dipped in milk.⁴

Prophet^(saww) never used to have harmful food or drink. He also never used to eat hot food, he used to wait until food or drink cools down.

According to view of Al- Kulayni, Prophet Mohammad^(saww) mentions that:
“God has not fed us fire and foods which are hot are not blessed”.⁵

1. Tabarsi, 1392, P. 26.

2. Al-Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 6, P. 305, No. 1.

3. Ibid, P. 329, No. 1.

4. Refer to: Ibid, P. 273, No. 2.

5. Al-Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 6, P. 322, No. 1.

God in the holy Quran says:

«ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سَبِيلَ رَبِّكَ ذَلِكَ يُخْرِجُ مِنْ بَطْنِهَا
شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلَفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ»

“Honey is too much beneficial as honey bee eats from all the fruits and it is healing for people”. Prophet Mohammad (saww) used to have honey as it is beneficial and delicious”.¹

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to have beneficial food as medical principles.

According to the traditions of Imam Sadiq^(as), Prophet used to have soup made of milk and meat.

Imam Sadiq^(as) said:

“milk, vinegar, oil, and sawiq (a kind of food made of mashed meat and mashed wheat or barley together with sugar and dates) as the food of the prophets, and meat and milk as their soup”.²

According to view of Tabarsi:

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) favorite food was meat as meat increases the strength of hearing and sight and it is superior to all foods in the world.³

Also:

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to love lamb and loved hand and shoulder part of the meat.⁴

1. Surah An-Nahl, Verse 69.

2. Al-Barqi, 1330, Vol. 2, P. 491; Ibid, P. 467; Ibid, P. 482; Al-Kulayni, Ibid, P. 306, No. 1.

3. Tabarsi, 1392, P.30.

4. Al-Kulayni, Ibid, P. 315, No. 3.

In the other Expression:

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to open his fast with sweets if available and if not available would open with warm water.

Drinking warm water cleans the stomach and liver, strengthen the teeth's, makes the smell of mouth pleasant, strengthens eyes, stimulate blood vessels, remove bitterness, sharpens the eye sight, decreases heat in the stomach, cause forgiveness of sins and cures the headache.¹

Prophet^(saww) always used to prefer one food at a time and also always used to eat simple food.

For this reason, one of the traditions of Holy Prophet^(saww) is to leave food when one part of your stomach remains.

Islam says to divide stomach food into 3 phases:

1. Water
2. air
3. empty.

If stomach is full, one cannot concentrate on obligatory prayers, if it is empty still you cannot concentrate so Islam chooses a way to leave stomach 1/3 empty to work well and be able to concentrate.

The Amount Prophet Used to Eat, when the Prophet Ate

The prophet Mohammad^(saww) always used to advice people to eat less.

1. Tabarsi, Ibid, PP. 27-28.

Riley (2011) states in his book that eating less has many benefits and it's not all about eating less, eating quality food is necessary for us to have better life, mood, and sleep. This claim is further supported by Janet that use of your mind to change your body.¹

We can use our mind to eat less to have better mind and body (Thomson, 2012).²

It is clearly understood from the scientific point of view to follow healthy diet which Islam recommends.

In this relationship, Imam Baqir^(as) said:

“God hates the person who fills their stomach and full stomach leads to transgression”.³

one of the famous hadith from Prophet Mohammad^(saww) is to do these three things less:

1. Eat
2. Sleep
3. Speak

The full stomach cause more disease, heartache, and makes the body weak to pray.

Therefore, Islam talked about this issue in details to eat less and never fill your stomach.

1. Refer to: Eating Less: Say Goodbye to Overeating, Gillian Riley, (2011), UK: Ebury Publishing.

2. Refer to: Thomson, Think More, Eat Less: Use Your Mind to Change Your Body, 2012.

3. Al-Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 6, P. 270, No. 11.

Also, Imam Sadiq^(as) narrates from Imam Ali^(as) that the Prophet with regards to eating also said: **“Eating food with people brings about abundance. One person’s food portion is enough for two people, and two people’s food portion is enough for four”**.¹

In general, the habits of the Prophet are as follows:

- 1- used to eat food while facing Qibblah.
- 2- used to wash his hands before but not drying and wash his hand after but drying.
- 3- invite people to eat with him and anyone who used to visit him.
- 4- he used to offer food to them.
- 5- used to eat with his family and servants.
- 6- open and end with prayers.
- 7- open and end with salt and eat whatever was offered to him.
- 8- one should eat with his family and together for abundance.
- 9- inviting relatives for food to maintain healthy relationship.

How did the Prophet Eat and Drink?

There are numerous narrations about how the Prophet ate and the mannerisms he followed:²

1. Al-Barqi, 1330, Vol. 2, P. 398; Al-Kulayni, Ibid, Vol. 6, P. 273.
2. Refer to: Jabbari, Sire-ye Akhlaqi-e Payambar-e A‘zam: Suluk-e Fardi, 2011.

This claim is also backed by medical science that you can transform you're eating habits and your life by developing effective eating skills.¹

by and large, Prophet Mohammad^(saww) stomach was never filled with food and used to start and end his food with salt.

Also Prophet Mohammad^(saww) only used to eat when he felt hungry and when his body required nutrition.

Nuri Al-Tabarsi quotes that, Prophet Mohammad^(saww) said:

“eat when you need it and stop when you still require more”.²

According to the traditions of Prophet Mohammad^(saww):

a Muslims should have 2 meals every day: one in the morning and one at night. It is said by Holy Prophet that not to abandon dinner, even eat few pieces of bread with salt.³

Furthermore Al-Tabarsi states that if one leaves dinner will reach to old age soon.

In the other hand, The Prophet advised others against eating alone as he never ate alone when he had the opportunity to eat with another person:

“Would you like me to inform you who the worst among you is? One who rejects his guest, beats his servant, and eats alone”.⁴

1. Refer to: Koenig, Outsmarting Overeating: Boost Your Life Skills, End Your Food Problems, 2015.

2. Nuri Tabarsi, 1409, Vol. 16, P. 221, No. 17.

3. Al-Tabarsi, 1932, P. 195.

4. Al-Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 2, P. 290; Al-Tabarsi, 1932, P. 31.

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to invite people for food and it is recommended in Islam to invite people for unity and abundance.

- 1- Prophet Used to start the food before and end after the guest has finished. It is recommended to eat in clean plates and glass.
- 2- Prophet only used to eat what was in front of him and was offered to him and would not reach which was not reachable as the matter of social politeness.
- 3- Prophet never used to breathe in his glass while drinking water as concern for hygiene.
- 4- According to view of Holy Prophet by drinking all water at once causes pain to liver so one should avoid drinking in one sip until the amount is too less.
- 5- Prophet used to eat from right hand as eating with right hand is a symbol of blessing.

There are other hadiths from Prophet Mohammad^(saww) that he used to do many things with his right hand such as; eating, drinking, taking, giving, putting clothes, wearing shoes, and moving objects.¹

According to a narration, Imam Sadiq^(as) narrates from his ancestors that the Prophet discouraged eating and drinking with the left hand.²

1. Refer to: Al-Tabarsi, 1932, P.23.

2. Refer to: Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, Vol. 2, P. 130, No. 447.

Whenever Prophet Mohammad^(saww) used to eat food, he would bring food close to his mouth rather than lowering his head towards food.

Prophet Mohammad^(saww) never leaned while eating; he did this to avoid being arrogant and God hates the arrogant people.

Allah in the Holy Quran says:

«قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ»

“He said: Then get forth from this (state), for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely you are of the abject ones”.¹

Other habits of the Prophet:

- 1- Prophet used to sit like servants and used to sit in a way where he can easily wake up.²
- 2- Prophet used to love eating food with servants. The intention of such behaviors of Prophet is to make such habits customary for Muslims.
- 3- Prophet discourages people of formalities.
- 4- Prophet used to eat food with hands to observe hygiene.
- 5- Prophet used to wash his hands before and after the food.

Note: By washing hands according to view of Prophet:

1. Removes poverty,
2. Increase sustenance (Rizq),
3. Abundance of good.

1. Surah Al-A'raf, Verse 13.

2. Refer to: Al- Shifaa Beta'riif Huquq Aal-Mustafa, Vol.1, P. 86.

- Keeping away insanity,
- Accuracy of sight,
- Keeps away from illness.

10. Prophet has recommended his followers to eat by hand.

Imam Sadiq^(as) says:

“Prophet sat like a servant, put his hand on the ground, and ate with three fingers. He did not eat with two fingers like arrogant people”.¹

11. Prophet never used to waste his food and always used to end it.

One of the most important matters nowadays is waste; one should avoid waste at all cost.

Allah in the Holy Quran says:

«يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَشَرِبُوا وَلَا تَسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ»

“O children of Adam! attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant”.²

12. According to view of Prophet “The greatest blessing is in the ending of the food”.

1. Al-Kulayni, 1367, Vol. 6, P. 297, No. 6; Al-Barqi, 1330, Vol. 2, P. 442; Majlesi, 1403, Vol. 63, P. 414.

2. Surah Al-A'raf, Verse 31.

Imam Sadiq^(as) says:

**“The Prophet wiped the dish of the food and said:
‘Anyone who does this, his action is like he has given
charity to the size of the dish of his food’”.**¹

6. According to view of Holy Prophet angels pray for the abundance of sustenance for the one who finishes his food.

Allah says in Holy Quran:

«وَأِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ»

“And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe”.²

It is clear if we are thankful to him, he will surely enhance his blessing towards us. It is act of gratefulness to finish your food, to avoid waste to show kind of thankfulness to God.

7. Prophet used to be careful with hygiene of the food, the container where food or drink is as matter of health and hygiene.
8. Prophet used to eat/drink in plate/glass which were cleaner and which were easier to clean.
9. Prophet used to drink in palm of his hands.

Prophet said:

“There is no dish cleaner than the palm of hands”.³

1. Al-Kulayni, Ibid , Vol. 6, P. 297, No. 4; Al-Barqi, Ibid, Vol. 2, P. 443, No. 318; Al- Hurr Al-Ameli, 1429, Vol. 16, P. 496, No. 1.

2. Surah Ibrahim, Verse 7.

3. Al-Tabarsi, 1932, P. 31.

The Prophet recommended drinking or eating in wood, skin, and earthenware material.

Conclusion

Therefore it is concluded that one should have positive etiquettes of eating and drinking. Eating and drinking are the necessity of human life.

One has to be careful in choosing his food or drink. It is recommended to eat permissible food, eat less, eat while sitting and share food with others.

If we clearly study the life of Holy Prophet^(saww) and his family (Ahle-Bait^{PBUT}) we can learn the etiquette of eating and drinking.

Small effort was made to make people aware of what were the eating and drinking habits of Holy Prophet^(saww).

Generally, Few points to consider for etiquette of eating and drinking:

1. Has to be Permissible food,
2. Washing hand at the beginning,
3. Clean plates or glass,
4. Starting with Bismilla,
5. Eating with right Hand,
6. Starting with salt to eat,
7. End food with praising God,
8. Washing hands,
9. Drink in 3 Breaths.

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